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The Image of Women Strike in “Wiadomości” TVP and “Fakty” TVN news services from October 22 until November 2 2020, in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

Abstract

The article presents an analysis of the contents of news stories broadcasted by the news services of two leading Polish TV stations dedicated to the social protests sparked by the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal of 22 October 2020 on tightening the law on abortion in Poland. Moreover, a closer look was taken on the frequency and method of connecting the coverage of the protests with the matter of COVID-19 pandemic. The obtained results were set in the context, of the theory of the framing and agenda-setting. The outcome of the analyses presents essential differences in the methods in informing the public of the social protests used by the newsroom of “Wiadomości” TVP and “Fakty” TVN.

Keywords: television in Poland, news services, social protests, Women Strike, COVID-19.

Obraz protestów Strajku Kobiet w serwisach informacyjnych „Wiadomości” TVP i „Fakty” TVN w okresie 22 października–2 listopada 2020 roku w kontekście pandemii COVID-19

Streszczenie

W artykule przeprowadzono analizę zawartości materiałów newsowych, wyemitowanych przez serwisy informacyjne dwóch polskich wiodących stacji telewizyjnych, poświęconych protestom społecznym po decyzji Trybunału Konstytucyjnego, który w orzeczeniu z 22 października 2020 roku ograniczył obowiązujące w Polsce prawo aborcyjne. Przebadano także częstotliwość i sposób łączenia relacji dedykowanych protestom z wątkiem pandemii COVID-19. Uzyskane wyniki osadzono w kontekście teorii *framingu* oraz *agenda-setting*. Wyniki badania pokazują zasadnicze różnice w sposobach informowania o protestach społecznych wykorzystywanych przez redakcję „Wiadomości” TVP i Fakty „TVN”.

Słowa kluczowe: telewizja w Polsce, serwisy informacyjne, protesty społeczne, Strajk Kobiet, COVID-19.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way countries and societies function. The mode of transmission of the coronavirus has influenced the dynamics of social life, among others to the possibilities of publicly manifesting one's views stemming from the Constitution of the Republic of Poland guaranteeing freedom of assembly for Polish citizens. The news reports investigated by the author deal with the social protests organized by the All-Poland Women's Strike following the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal, presided over by Julia Przyłębska, in which the judges decided that medical grounds for abortion resulting from severe and irreversible foetal abnormalities or incurable life-threatening disease are unconstitutional¹.

The objective of the study was to analyse the method of conducting coverage of these events in evening news services of two Polish TV stations with particular reference to the information on the threat of COVID-19.

While analysing the two news services, it is important to bear in mind the legal framework for the broadcasters. The public television, pursuant to Article 21 of the Broadcasting Act of 29 December 1992, ought to, among others, be guided by responsibility for words, present the variety of events and phenomena in the country and abroad with integrity, foster free shaping of views and formulating of public opinions, as well as enable the citizens and their organisations to participate in public life through presentation of diverse views and positions². TVN, a commercial broadcaster, a part of the Discovery Communications³ concern since 2018, is not legally imposed a similar catalogue of orders towards its content. According to Article 1 of the afore-mentioned act, the task of a non-public broadcaster is, among others, to provide information⁴, and in accordance with Article 1, its television broadcasts may not encourage social actions contrary to law or propagate attitudes and beliefs contrary to the moral values and social interest. In particular, they may not include any discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religious affiliation or nationality⁵. Therefore, it is apparent from the Act, that the public broadcaster has a wider spectrum of statutory obligations.

Despite unquestionable changes in the media consumption and the growing informative role of the Internet, watching news services remains a kind of secular ritual to a large part of the society, as pointed out by Aleksandra Seklecka⁶. According to the analysis conducted by Nielsen Company, "Fakty" and "Wiadomości", despite

¹ See: *Wyrok Trybunału Konstytucyjnego z dnia 22 października*, Dz. U. 2021, poz. 175, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20210000175> (accessed: 15.04.2021).

² See: *Ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 1992 roku o radiofonii i telewizji*, Dz. U. 1993, Nr 7, poz. 34, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19930070034/U/D19930034Lj.pdf> (accessed: 12.03.2021).

³ KOZ, *Discovery finalizuje przejęcie właściciela TVN*, <https://www.press.pl/tresc/52490,discover-y-finalizuje-przejecie-wlasciciela-tvn> (accessed: 12.03.2021).

⁴ See: *Ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 1992 roku o radiofonii i telewizji*...

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ A. Seklecka, *Rytuały medialne w komunikowaniu masowym*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2017, p. 12.

an annual decrease in viewing figures, are still watched by a significant percentage of adult Poles. In the case of “Fakty”, in the first quarter of 2021, the news service was viewed by 2.86 m people, whereas “Wiadomości” by an average of 2.45 m people⁷.

Methodology and hypotheses

While attempting to outline the state of research, it is impossible not to mention the theories that allow to theoretically locate the investigated piece of media reality. According to the author, the theory of *framing* created by Erving Goffman⁸ and later developed by, among others, Robert Entman⁹ and Denis McQuail¹⁰ and the theory of *agenda-setting*, described in detail by Tomasz Goban-Klas¹¹, can both be used to explain the phenomenon in question. The author was leaning towards a conviction that *framing* is a second level of *agenda-setting* and the theories are complementary to one another. This complementarity is visible in the elements of a categorisation key used in the research: positioning of the investigated stories within the service (*agenda setting*), the image of protests after the Constitutional Tribunal ruling created by the newsrooms, and joining the description of the protests with the theme of COVID-19 pandemic (*framing*).

The study thus refers to the issue of information selection. The author shares the view of Marek Palczewski, that information selection itself is not manipulation, unless it violates the commonly accepted in the media workshop and ethical rules¹². Connecting the subject of social protests with the threats of COVID-19 pandemic in the news stories doesn't seem like a controversial decision. However, a question arises, whether the COVID-19 related topics were included in the social protests stories in a way that was justified by current events, i.e. because of the Minister of Health statements from a given day, or they were used for the purpose of creating a specific interpretation frame. The answer to such posed question is not possible to obtain merely from the data collected with the use of quantitative content analysis. Therefore, qualitative analysis was used to allow describing the content of investigated stories in their construction and content layers, as well as obtain additional information necessary to formulate accurate conclusions. In the environment of Polish media

⁷ KOZ, *Fakty na czele programów informacyjnych po pierwszym kwartale 2021 roku*, https://www.press.pl/tresc/65525,_fakty_na_czele_programow_informacyjnych_po_pierwszym_kwartale-2021-roku (accessed: 12.03.2021).

⁸ E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, Harper & Row, New York 1974.

⁹ R.M. Entman, *Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*, „Journal of Communication” 1993, Vol. 43, Issue 4, p. 52.

¹⁰ D. McQuail, *Teoria komunikowania masowego*, transl. M. Bucholc, A. Szulżycka, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 373.

¹¹ T. Goban-Klas, *Media i komunikowanie masowe. Teorie i analizy prasy, radia, telewizji i Internetu*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2005, p. 267–269.

¹² M. Palczewski, *Selekcja informacji w mediach – zasady, wartości, manipulacje*, „Naukowy Przegląd Dziennikarski” 2015, No. 2, p. 86.

scholars the use of qualitative analysis was not obvious methodology for such studies as far back as 20 years ago. At present, joining methods of a quantitative nature with those of qualitative one is postulated by, among others, Robert Szwed¹³, Jacek Dąbała¹⁴, or Teresa Sasinska-Klass¹⁵. As pointed out by Aleksandra Balcerzak and Tomasz Gackowski, it is the qualitative analysis that allows for estimations of the subjective tone of a media message¹⁶.

The author decided to study a period of 12 days following Constitutional Tribunal ruling, which is from 22 October to 02 November 2020. The analysis of the content of news stories dedicated or referring to the social protests covered the first, most violent wave of social protests in Poland.

The research used a categorisation key comprised of 14 categories to further bring them together into four subject areas: the stories in terms of time and quantity, the image of the protesters, COVID-19 and the presence of politicians and experts. The research material was made available to the author thanks to the courtesy of the Laboratory of Media Studies of the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies of Warsaw University.

Delimiting the research topic allowed formulating research questions: If and how often did the newsrooms join the topic of protests with COVID-19 pandemic? (P1) How did the newsrooms present the protesting citizens? (P2) In what timeframe did the newsrooms present politicians and commentators speaking out about the protests? (P3) How did the newsrooms position stories devoted or related to the protests within the structure of the service? (P4)

The author assumed that in the stories devoted to the social protests following the Constitutional Tribunal ruling the newsrooms of “Fakty” and “Wiadomości” positioned and presented the social protests of Women’s Strike in a different way (H1). The theme of COVID-19 pandemic was more often linked to the coverage of Women’s Strike protests in the news releases of “Wiadomości” TVP than in those of “Fakty” TVN (H2).

¹³ R. Szwed, *Nieswoistość analizy dyskursu w nauce o komunikacji. Dyskurs jako przedmiot i metoda badań* [in:] *Media początku XXI wieku. Zawartość mediów czyli rozważania nad metodologią badań medjoznawczych*, ed. T. Gackowski, Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR, Warszawa 2011, pp. 18–19.

¹⁴ J. Dąbała, *W kręgu fenomenologicznej metody badania mediów* [in:] *Media początku XXI wieku. Zawartość mediów czyli rozważania nad metodologią badań medjoznawczych*, ed. T. Gackowski, Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR, Warszawa 2011, pp. 54–55.

¹⁵ T. Sasińska-Klas, *Analiza dyskursywna i jej zastosowanie w badaniach na gruncie nauk społecznych* [in:] *Odmiany współczesnych nauk o polityce*, eds. P. Borowiec, R. Kłosowicz, P. Ścigaj, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2014, p. 423.

¹⁶ A. Balcerzak, T. Gackowski, *Analiza zawartości* [in:] *Metody badania wizerunku w mediach*, eds. T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński, CeDeWu, Warszawa 2009, s. 30.

State of research

In the field of journalist information genres a TV news piece was thoroughly studied. The works by Magdalena Lisowska-Magdziarz¹⁷, Wiesław Godzic¹⁸, Marek Palczewski¹⁹, John Langer²⁰, Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska²¹ or Jagoda Bloch²² refer to many dimensions of TV news pieces, especially to social impact of television information genres. It needs to be mentioned however, that in the past 6 years, few analyses of content of Polish information services were conducted with the use of diverse research methods. Apart from an interesting monographic position by A. Seklecka, in which she comprehensively presents an information service as space of ritual communication and researches the method of news stories framing²³, an attempt at content analysis was also made by Małgorzata Rechcińska, who focused on investigating the verbal and visual layer of "Wiadomości" stories²⁴. Another noteworthy study is a report by Maciej Mrozowski and Tatiana Popadiak-Kuligowska made by order of the National Broadcasting Council²⁵. In the subject expertise including an analysis of the content of the three most important information services in Poland M. Mrozowski and T. Popadiak-Kuligowska compared selected broadcasts of "Wiadomości", "Fakty" and "Wydarzenia" from February 2016. Quantitative analysis covered three types of indicators regarding: the location and subject of individual pieces of information, the world presented in the news and the construction of the news. The research was completed with qualitative analysis, which allowed analysing elements related to journalistic workshop²⁶.

¹⁷ M. Lisowska-Magdziarz, *Media powszednie. Środki komunikowania masowego i szerokie paradygmaty medialne w życiu codziennym Polaków u progu XXI*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Kraków 2008.

¹⁸ W. Godzic, *Telewizja – najważniejsze medium XX wieku* [in:] *Media audiowizualne*, ed. W. Godzic, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2010.

¹⁹ M. Palczewski, *Nowy paradygmat newsa, infotainmentu i tabloidyzacji na przykładzie telewizyjnych serwisów informacyjnych (Wiadomości TVP i Fakty TVN)* [in:] *Ludzie polskich mediów. Celebryci i redaktorzy*, ed. K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2010.

²⁰ J. Langer, *Tabloid Television. Popular Journalism and „the other News”*, Routledge, London–New York 2011.

²¹ M. Bogunia-Borowska, *Fenomen telewizji. Interpretacje socjologiczne i kulturowe*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2012.

²² J. Bloch, *Telewizyjne serwisy informacyjne. Zmiany w sposobie czytania od czasów PRL do III RP*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Aspra-JR, Warszawa 2018.

²³ A. Seklecka, *Rytuały medialne...*

²⁴ M. Rechcińska, *Wiadomości TVP jako przejaw manipulacji w serwisie informacyjnym*, „Językoznawstwo” 2007, No. 1(1), pp. 119–138.

²⁵ M. Mrozowski, T. Popadiak-Kuligowska, *Ekspertyza programów informacyjnych głównych wydań TVP1 Wiadomości, TVN Fakty, Polsat Wydarzenia z okresu 4.02.2016–11.02.2016 r. Raport końcowy*, 03.2016, <https://www.press.pl/attachments/contents/43485/1c3cb61267a1b-5cd3fd763bab6c37156.pdf> (accessed: 5.04.2021).

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

While designing the research, special attention was attracted to a report of the Polish Language Council, which determined that 75% of over 300 information bars presented in the main edition of “Wiadomości” in the years 2016–2017 was persuasive, creational and expressive, instead of informative²⁷.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis – results

Materials in numbers

The amount of time devoted to a given event in a news service reflects the significance of this event for the given newsroom²⁸. In the period considered “Wiadomości” devoted to the protests a total of 114 minutes 51 seconds in 29 stories, which fully or partially dealt with the subject of protests. By contrast, the newsroom of “Fakty” in the same period emitted 33 stories covering the protests with a total of 86 minutes 32 seconds. It is worth noting that “Fakty” also used *live* coverage to inform about the protests. Thus, “Wiadomości” devoted more time to the subject of the protests, however, a TVP news service lasts an average of 30 minutes, whereas the commercial broadcaster’s edition is around 23 minutes long.

Both programmes usually included two or three stories related to the protests. In the case of “Fakty”, one day was recorded when the viewers saw one story and two days when they had a chance to see four stories, including *live* coverage.

Positioning of stories

In the case of “Wiadomości”, even though the subject was always presented in the *pre-view*²⁹, the news stories devoted to the protests, especially in their initial phase, i.e. between 22 and 26 October, occupied distant places in the *flatplan*³⁰ of editions – between 6 and 11 position. The change of story location happened on 27 October, when the news piece about the protests got to the first place of the service, and for the following three days such stories were presented as second in line. The qualitative analysis showed that on 27 October “Wiadomości” decided to move the protest news up due to online release of the statement by Jarosław Kaczyński, in which the leader of Law and Justice called for, among others, protecting catholic churches against

²⁷ PAP, *Odrzucono sprawozdanie Rady Języka Polskiego o paskach informacyjnych TVP*, <https://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/media/artykuly/1420152,odrzucono-sprawozdanie-rady-jezyka-polskiego-o-paskach-informacyjnych-tvp.html> (accessed: 23.03.2021).

²⁸ The author during her work as a service reporter for “Panorama” TVP and “Informacje” TV Polsat had occasions to witness “time appraisal” of the news story due to its weight for the newsroom.

²⁹ Preview – a short preview of the news story included in the information broadcast.

³⁰ Flatplan – the plan of the news service/program created by the main editor in newsroom.

demonstrators³¹. The outcomes of this positioning news stories analyses in case of “Wiadomości” show, that the described hierarchy of news stories (agenda-setting) was connected to the activity of politicians of the ruling party in Poland.

In the case of “Fakty”, at the beginning of the investigated period the newsroom located the stories on the second or third place in the service, then from 24 October to 2 November the protests news were covered first. In case of “Fakty” positioning of described news stories shows that the topic was important to this newsroom from the beginning of protests.

COVID-19

In 11 news pieces of “Wiadomości” devoted to the protests there were references to the epidemic threat created by the participants of public gatherings. Those references had many facets: as information of epidemic threat posed by the protesters located in the presenter announcement, statements of doctors warning of the results of being in crowds shown in the videos, the whole story devoted to the threat of the virus spreading among the protesters. In this aspect, “Fakty” were not as active. The author noted 8 cases, when the newsroom signalled this topic either in the news piece itself or its preview. The qualitative analysis showed, that if the service had touched upon the subject of epidemic threat arising from the protests, a reporter in *off*³² pointed to the Constitutional Tribunal ruling as the source of protests and hence, the source of the epidemic problem.

Protesters in the news stories

In the matter of footage used by reporters to illustrate the information on protests, recurring construction-editing patterns have been identified in the actions of both newsrooms. “Wiadomości”, apart from the standard camera operator shots, used videos registered with mobile phones. The newsroom used this type of footage and photographs obtained from social media, even though being of worse technical quality, on multiple occasions, even within one news piece. The conducted qualitative analysis shows that “Wiadomości” used this type of stories when the image of protesters was unfavourable, i.e. when they were using vulgar language, damaged other people’s property, disturbed church services, etc.

„Fakty” used footage registered with mobile phones much less frequently. They did appear in the news informing of protests in churches. The presented shots showed crowds of demonstrators registered from height and those where demonstrators were seen with banners.

³¹ See: *Oświadczenie Prezesa PIS, Wicepremiera Jarosława Kaczyńskiego – 27 października 2020 roku*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZa4PFz4dPQ> (accessed: 24.04.2021).

³² Off – verbal content of a news story created by a reporter.

In the category of the so-called effects³³, “Wiadomości” used a different *modus operandi* than “Fakty”. In the investigated period of time in the TVP stories, the author identified 35 effects containing vulgar expressions spoken by the demonstrators. Some of them appeared several times within one piece of news. In “Fakty” stories similar content effects were identified, however, those vulgar or obscene were shown 7 times.

In a collection of 29 investigated stories of “Wiadomości” 20 statements by the protesters were identified. It is worth noting, that 13 of them are statements by Marta Lempart – one of the leaders of Women’s Strike. It is also important to see that the majority of Lempart’s statements were recordings registered with mobile phones by other persons, recordings registered with a mobile phone by M. Lempart herself and the opinion of the strike’s leader from Twitter service, quoted by a reporter in a news story. The total time that “Wiadomości” devoted to presenting the position of the protesters was 2 minutes and 8 seconds.

In the same category “Fakty” had 33 stories with a total of 77 statements by the protesters, including 8 statements by M. Lempart. The total time devoted to the opinions of protesters was 8 minutes and 49 seconds. In “Fakty”, contrary to “Wiadomości”, the presented statements of the protesters were not those registered on mobile phones.

Politicians in news stories

In the examined period in “Wiadomości” 49 statements by politicians appeared, also in the form of tweets displayed on the screen. 25 of them belonged to the representatives of the United Right. The total time of all statements by the politicians amounted to 428 seconds, 326 seconds of which were statements by the United Right politicians. In the case of “Fakty”, 117 of such statements were noted, 68 of which were given by the politicians of the governing parties. The time distribution in the case of this newsroom was the following: 648 seconds were sedated to all the statements given by the politicians, out of which 541 seconds were those of the members of the United Right.

Even more about the way of presenting the protests by the two newsrooms is shown by the statistics presenting the number of experts/commentators and persons sharing their opinion on the subject of abortion, for example, parents of children with lethal defects. “Wiadomości” invited 69 experts/commentators to share their negative opinion on the protests in the news stories. Only 2 opinions presented by this newsroom can be considered as supportive of the protests. By contrast, “Fakty” presented 12 negative opinions and 41 opinions supporting the protests. What needs to be mentioned is that the group of construction elements of the news included statements registered by the newsroom, those from social media and those presented on graphic boards.

³³ Effect – a short piece of news story that is not a statement, but contains audio and video message.

To sum up the presentation of research results, it needs to be underlined that “Wiadomości” never used a reporter stand-up³⁴. In “Fakty”, a reporter Katarzyna Górniak decided to do it once. The information bars located during the presenter’s preview on a receiver’s screen became an editorial commentary element. “Wiadomości” showed them during every presenter’s preview, “Fakty” used the bar in 10 out of 33 emitted stories.

Results – qualitative analysis

Numerical results, obtained in individual categories of the key may leave something to be desired during the formulation of conclusions arising from the research. Therefore, it was justified to complete them with a qualitative analysis carried out on selected examples. For the qualitative research the author selected three days, in which she compared the content and construction layers of the news stories chosen for the analysis. Additionally, the qualitative investigation allowed analysing whether TVP had, as a public broadcaster, located in its information stories elements that are in construction and content accordance with the requirements imposed by the Broadcasting Act.

The qualitative analysis covered three days: the first when the Constitutional Tribunal announced its ruling (22 October); the second when the leader of Law and Justice, Jarosław Kaczyński decided to publicize his address in which he calls for the protection of churches against the attacks of the demonstrators (27 October); he third when Women’s Strike organized the so-called March on Warsaw (30 October). Due to the limitations of the length of the article, only the analysis of the stories dated 30 October is presented below.

30 October – qualitative analysis of the content of stories by “Wiadomości” and “Fakty”

Description of the events: on this day in Warsaw the biggest protest since the ruling of Constitutional Tribunal, or the so-called March on Warsaw was organized by Women’s Strike. The grand scale demonstration passed in a generally calm atmosphere, apart from an incident in the Old Town, where a group of football hooligans – opponents of the Protest, attacked a police cordon.

“Wiadomości”, 30 October, footage – 6.39 s., author: A. Borecki, position in the flat-plan: 2

Presenter’s preview – message: we have a record number of new COVID-19 cases, while the opposition calls for mass protests in the streets. The health of Poles ceases to be a priority, when the main goal is to forcefully overthrow the government.

³⁴ Stand-up – a speech by a reporter of an informative or commenting nature, located in the majority of cases at the end of news story.

Construction and content of the story:

Using the images of protesting crowds of people not keeping the social distance, the reporter says there are cases of demonstrators not wearing masks. The statement by a professor of virology: young people, who think they are immortal, will suffer long-term health consequences after recovering from COVID-19. A reporter from off says the organisers of protests disregard the limitations (images of crowds and an ambulance among them). The statement of M. Lempart (from a press conference): no one no longer treats COVID-19 limitations concerning gatherings seriously because they are unlawful. The reporter from off says that infection in the crowd is not difficult showing an image of a thick crowd of demonstrators. The statement of the former inspector of the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate: if there is a super spreader in the crowd, they can infect up to several dozens of people. The reporter from off says that the demonstrators can infect their parents or grandparents (image of a protesting crowd).

The reporter goes on to say that there are infected people among the demonstrators, as evidenced by an example from Myślibóž, where a man who was aware of the infection beat up a priest (in the image section, photos of this incident are seen, recorded a few days before with a mobile phone). Next, the reporter shows on a board a part of the public prosecutor's statement, which informs that the aggressor could have infected up to even 150 people. The reporter from off says that the judge from Myślibóž did not agree to arrest the defendant (the incident video is emitted again). The statement by a professor of virology: the number of infections is known to rise after such crowded events. The reporter from off says that there were more infections after the *black lives matter* – by showing charts of the rise on a board. The reporter goes on to say that we are beginning to notice the epidemic consequences of the protests. The number of infected is given, and the reporter informs that since the beginning of the demonstrations the number of infections doubled. The statement of a doctor: what threshold we have to step over in Poland to start seeing there is a pandemic? The reporter from off says paramedics join the appeal. The statement of a paramedic: we beg you to stay home. It's for your own safety.

Using the images of crowds in the streets, the reporter from off says the prosecutor's office announced an evaluation of the protests in the context of bringing danger to many people. A board: a statement of the National Public Prosecutor's Office about protests being illegal. The reporter from off says also the President of the European Commission calls for staying at home. The statement of Ursula von den Leyen: We have to avoid the crowds, close contact and closed spaces. The reporter from off says these arguments do not reach the opposition, who calls for getting out on the streets to protest (pictures of the opposition politicians). The statement of the Civic Platform leader: the place for every responsible politician is the protest and support of people fighting for their rights. The statement of an MP of the Left: you will not silence us anymore. The statement of a publicist of "Sieć": they burden their conscience with deaths of many people, with breaking the front of protection against the pandemic.

The reporter from off claims also “Gazeta Wyborcza” toys with people’s health by calling for demonstrations. The statement of a professor from University of Łódź: the only goal is to stir up emotions and the ship that is called the Republic of Poland. After one off sentence, the statement of M. Lempart appears: the aim of the protest is the resignation of the government. The reported from off says president Andrzej Duda called for cooling off the emotions and a draft act was prepared to defuse the dispute, that allows abortion in the situations of lethal defects, but still protects children with Down syndrome. A board with the president’s statement appears: it is a painful situation, but protecting the lives of children with lethal defects remains beyond human power. The reporter from off says the president is trying thereby to protect human life and mitigate the conflict, which can lead to a bigger number of deaths from COVID-19 (images of pregnant women at hospitals).

Analysis

The story is obtained with images of crowds of demonstrators; however, there is no information about the biggest protest so far, which paralyzed a significant part of the capital (described construction of news story indicates using *framing*). This information will appear on this day in “Wiadomości” in a news story located on the 6th position (this activity indicates using *agenda-setting* elements). There is no information on the attempt to disrupt the demonstration by the football hooligans in the Old Town. The information about the priest from Myślubóź who was beaten up by an infected protester had already been presented in “Wiadomości” a few days earlier.

„Fakty”, 30. October: footage: 3.46 s., author: Maciej Knapik, position in the flatplan: 1.

Presenter’s preview – message: demonstrators have gathered in a few locations in Warsaw and it is the culmination of protests. There is a *live* from Dmowskiego roundabout, which is filled with people. The presenter: the crowd is huge, but there is no verified data about the number of participants. There have been a few incidents in the streets, but the March on Warsaw continues.

Construction and content of the story:

The story starts with an image of a crowd converging in Dmowskiego roundabout and the so-called effect – chanting of the demonstrators: I think, I feel, I decide. The reporter from off says it is the climax of the protests. The statement of M. Lempart: we can smell fear and it is a beautiful smell. An image from the Prime Minister’s Office with crowds of protesters chanting: the government to the gutter. The reporter

says the demonstrators have gathered in three locations in the capital and set off to Dmowskiego roundabout. They have also gathered in other places (images of protesters). The statement of two young demonstrators: we support the protest with all our hearts. The statement of an elderly couple: this is an assassination on our freedom. The statement of two young women: this government should resign.

The reporter shows pictures from the Castle Square and says from off that the police have dispersed a group of football hooligans hostile towards the protest. The statement of a protester: hooligans just come here to get into a fight. The reporter from off says the marches have joined in the city centre. The statement of two participants: the state should take care of us, not deprive us of fundamental rights. The statement of a protester: they crossed the line a long time ago. The reporter from off shows footage from the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw informing that nationalists have gathered there and refused to speak to the press and media. The reporter from off shows the protest again and says the organisers called to everyone to wear masks, abstain from violence and avoid provocations. The statement from the press conference of Women's Strike by Klementyna Suchanow: we call for common sense and solidarity.

The reporter from off uses images of demonstrators gathering next to buses and says people from all over Poland came to join the protests. The statement of two demonstrators: we wouldn't be here if we didn't feel like it.

The reporter from off informs that the government appealed to the protesters. The statement of the Prime Minister: I ask everyone who are angry – stay at home. The statement by minister Michał Dworczyk: people have the right to protest – this is obvious, but we are in the middle of pandemic now. The reporter from off comments on the statement of the prime minister saying the people who compose the Constitutional Tribunal should remember about the pandemic when delivering a ruling. The statement of a protester: you shouldn't have p...ed us off – fight the virus, not the women. The reporter from off with the help of a board informs that the courts will have a higher number of judges on arrest calls, and the Supreme Bar Council announces to help every detained person (images of the Civic Platform politicians with legal counsellors). The statement of the Supreme Bar Council leader: over 1 000 counsellors are committed to this help. The reporter from off says the Civic Coalition has also promised the support. The statement of the Civic Platform MP: we will protect you. The reporter from off says the Trade Unions Sierpień '80 also promise legal assistance. Still from off, the reporter uses boards to inform of the public prosecutor's announcement regarding the use of provisions of law to punish the demonstrators. The statement of M. Lempart: Mr Ziobro would have to prove that someone caused specific damage to specific persons. The reporter from off states one of prosecutors wanted to apply those very same provisions in the matter of postal voting but her investigation was discontinued. The statement of an MP of the Left: women have the right to the same rights as in Western democracies. The reporter from off says the demonstrators underline this is not a left-wing revolution, but European standards. The protests took place in many other cities – the reporter finishes (images of the protesters).

Analysis

The story contains a detailed coverage of the protests conveying accurately the scale of the event. However, the reporter decides to put a background element in it, which doesn't have a direct connection to the protests (the theme of dropping the investigation – visible element of *framing*). The reporter does not mention the COVID-19 threat and doesn't inform of the legislative initiative of the president regarding mitigation of the effects arising from the Constitutional Tribunal ruling. This information will be included in the second "Fakty" broadcast on 30. October (visible element of *agenda-setting*).

Conclusion

Seklecka identifies 8 types of framing in the messages of information services: a frame based on a person; a conflict frame; "morality", "social responsibility" and "economic consequences" frame; "suffering", "making decisions", "catching criminals" formula; action formula; irony formula; national package formula; nostalgic formula³⁵. Applying the division proposed by A. Seklecka and using the results of the qualitative analysis carried out, it is safe to assume that the newsroom of "Wiadomości", while covering the subject of social protests in 2020, used the conflict frame, "morality" and "social responsibility" frame, as well as the national package formula. The theme of COVID-19 was located in the "social responsibility" frame. In the case of "Fakty", many investigated stories could be classified as action frame and "suffering" formula, as well as a frame based on a person.

In the report of M. Mrozowski and T. Popadiak-Kuligowska from 2017, it was stated "Wiadomości" did not present equivalently diverse points of view; it also happened that the events were reported unilaterally³⁶. The results of the analysis of this newsroom's stories from 2020 show that there has been no change in this respect. As an example, in the category of expert/commentator, "Wiadomości" did not present opinions other than those condemning the protests. In the case of presenting the reasons of the protesters, "Wiadomości" showed a few statements of the Strike leaders recorded during press conferences of Women's Strike. The remaining statements of the protesters were taken from social media.

A change in the method of preparation of the stories by the public broadcaster is visible. Whereas in 2016 the main sources of information included in the news were accounts of people collected by the reporter, for example, the statements of the events participants, with a small share of other sources (i.e. external content), in 2020 content from social media was, according to the author, used by the reporters of "Wiadomości" too often. Those stories were mainly presenting the vulgar language of the protesters or their bad behaviours.

³⁵ A. Seklecka, *Rytuały medialne...*, p. 309–333.

³⁶ M. Mrozowski, T. Popadiak-Kuligowska, *Ekspertyza programów informacyjnych...*

In the case of “Fakty”, similar to 2016 research, the news stories of this newsroom is characterised by a noticeably greater diversity of presented opinions, both from the politicians and the experts, even though, as shown by the results of qualitative analysis, also in this segment there is a lack of balance. Contrary to the coverage of “Wiadomości”, a greater number of statements by the protesters were made directly “at the camera”. Vulgar or reprehensible behaviours registered on mobile phones are much fewer.

The above mentioned analyses confirm the hypothesis (H1), that the newsrooms of “Wiadomości” and “Fakty” had completely different ways of covering and positioning the run of social protests following the Constitutional Tribunal ruling. Additionally, it should be mentioned that “Wiadomości” violated statutory requirements, for example, by not keeping the plurality of opinions among people commenting the social protests.

The qualitative analysis allowed for a positive verification of the hypothesis (H2). The quantitative data show that “Wiadomości” linked the subjects of pandemic and social protests much more often (38% of stories) than “Fakty” (24% of stories). The qualitative analysis also proved that the commercial broadcaster’s service informed of only observing or lack thereof of the social distance rules by the protesters or pointed to the Constitutional Tribunal ruling as the original cause of the protests. “Wiadomości” paid attention to the moral responsibility of the demonstrators for public health and quoted representatives of the health care sector, who criticized the protesters.

The differences arising from the method of presenting the protest are explained by S. Allan, while analysing the term of journalistic neutrality: “ideals such as objectivity or impartiality are carried out so long as they conform to the ethos and guidelines of media corporations”³⁷. This ethos and guidelines of the public and private broadcasters are, due to the political situation in Poland, radically different, and the COVID-19 pandemic has not corrected those assumptions. According to the evaluation of the author, in the years to come we need to expect the differences in the way of presenting events by both newsrooms will grow stronger.

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³⁷ S. Allan, *Kultura newsów*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2006, p. 67.

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